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The various pictures of Vittore Carpaccio reveal clearly the poetic temperament of the artist and his descriptive skill, and a particular feeling for colour.

*Edited by*

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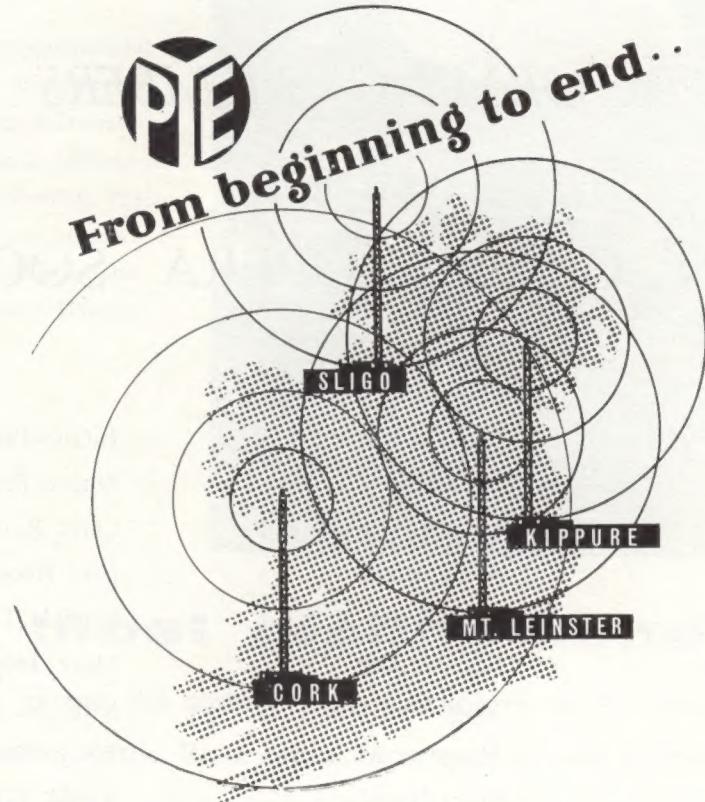
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*The Teatro Massimo Bellini of Catania, second city of Sicily, was inaugurated on the 31st May, 1890. The opera was "Norma" to honour its composer Vincenzo Bellini, who was born in Catania itself in 1801. The project of an opera house — indispensable then as now to the status of any self-respecting Italian city — had suffered many vicissitudes ever since 1812. In that year the architect's plans had been finally approved*

*by the City Senate but shortly after building had actually commenced everything was suspended and the funds were diverted to erect fortifications for the protection of Catania against Algerian pirates! Successive plans and projects failed to fructify until 78 years later when the long-desired Teatro Massimo took shape to the design of the Architect Carlo Sada after ten years a-building.*

*The theatre has an elegant façade framed*

Back Foyer





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View from Stage

by the wide-open space of the Piazza Bellini. Externally the building — like most others in the city — is in the local black basalt, Catania's characteristic stone and the product of countless eruptions of Mount Etna over the centuries. This great 10,700 foot Volcano with its column of black smoke rising from the summit, which is snow-capped in winter and spring, forms a dramatic back-cloth to the city.

View of Stage

The circular auditorium and the foyers are richly embellished with a décor of marble, frescos, mirrors, crystal chandeliers and gilt and crimson furnishings. An audience of 2,000 can be accommodated in the platea (stalls), the 122 boxes and loges ranged in four tiers and the comfortable gallery. The large stage and the technical equipment amply meet the requirements of the spectacular shows in which Italian opera abounds. The



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## THE ITALIAN INSTITUTE OF CULTURE IN DUBLIN

deals with cultural relations between Italy and Ireland, organizing courses in the Italian Language and Culture and promoting cultural activities such as lectures, concerts, exhibitions, film shows, etc. It runs a cultural information service and offers its assistance to Irish students going to Italy.

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There is also a newspaper and magazine section.

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The Record Library includes, besides the collections "The History of Music" and "The Anthology of Italian Literature in Sound", many recordings of symphonic, operatic, folkloristic and light music as well as modern prose and poetry.

The records may be heard, free of charge, on request.

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Includes Italian documentary films and slides of Italian works of art. These may be borrowed by teachers and lecturers.

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The Social Activities of the Institute, comprised of lectures in Italian and English, concerts, films, recitals, exhibitions, theatrical readings, etc., are open to all. Invitations are sent to all Members and to anyone who wishes to apply for them. Some of the Social Activities are exclusively reserved to Members.

News of the Institute's activities is given in "Italy Speaks", a magazine edited by the Institute. It is sent, free of charge, to all Members.



The fresco in the middle of the ceiling represents the apotheosis of Bellini, painted by Ernesto Bellandi. The halfmoons and circles surrounding the central part contain allegorical designs and scenes from Bellini's opera plays. The cornice around the paintings is in gold stucco.

The Central Loge, which was The Royal Box, as can be seen from the coat of arms of the House of Savoy.



The monument to Vincenzo Bellini, work of the sculptor Salvo Giordano.

original gas-lighting equipment, quite the very latest thing when it was installed by Edison in 1884, was replaced by electricity as late as 1929.

Orchestra and chorus which are permanently employed throughout the year for the opera and the concert seasons are among the best in Italy. Catania's official opera season normally runs from February to May but, as in most other Italian opera houses, only three to four performances are given weekly. Since its inauguration the world's most famous singers and conductors have performed in the Teatro Massimo Bellini — from Galli Curci and Toti dal Monte to Maria Callas, Renata Tebaldi and Ebe Stignani; from De Lucia, De Muro and Gigli to Del



Monaco, Di Stefano and Gobbi.

During the Season just concluded at Catania, besides "Norma", "Il Barbiere", "Madama Butterfly", "Il Trovatore" and "Samson and Delilah", the repertoire included Mascagni's "Il Piccolo Marat" and two modern operas, Mannino's "Vivi" and Nabokov's "La Morte di Rasputin" as well as the full-length ballet "Lac des Cigues" danced by the Ballet of the Bucharest Opera. The long roster of artists included Del Monaco, Flaviano Labò, Umberto Borsò, Bruno Prevedi, Piero Cappuccilli, and Sordello and, among the women, Antonietta Stella and Virginia Zeami. The principal conductors were Tullio Serafin, Molinari-Pradelli and Franco Patanè.

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# GIUSEPPE VERDI

1813 - 1901

Giuseppe Verdi was born on the 12th October, 1813, in the hamlet of Le Roncole near Busseto in the province of Parma. "My youth was hard" he remarked in one of the rare moments when he spoke of himself personally. His family circumstances were most humble — his father kept the small wine-shop in the village and one has to have seen the osteria of a remote country village in Italy even to-day to appreciate how close to bare subsistence must have been the condition of a family dependant on it in those days.

As might be expected the young Giuseppe's passionate absorption in music was obvious from an early age and the story of his boyhood is one of a tenacious struggle to acquire the elements of a literary education and some instruction in music and composition during years when he was still working by times in the fields or in his father's wineshop. Fortunately, his father was sympathetic. At the age of 12 he became organist in the village church of Le Roncole earning a few pounds a year. With the help of the prosperous and music loving grocer of Busseto by whom Verdi was later employed he was enabled to study music with Ferdinando Provesi, organist in Busseto Cathedral and director of the local Philharmonic Society.



Help came also from other sources and at the age of 18 Verdi, with the aid of a scholarship grant from a benevolent society in Busseto, went to Milan to try for admission to the Conservatorio there. After his celebrated rejection by that august institution he became, fortunately for him and, indeed for generations of opera lovers, a pupil of Maestro Lavigna, a good teacher, a fine musician and a master of theory.

After the early vicissitudes common in the career of an artist, Verdi had two operas accepted for performance in Milan. (*Oberto*, 1839, and *Un Giorno di Regno*, 1840). They had little success.

At this period Bellini was already prematurely dead, Rossini had been silent for years and Donizetti had become deranged. It seemed that the music of the Italian lyric theatre had lost its inspiration and would be left to live on its past. Then the Scala accepted and produced *Nabucco* in March 1842. It was a splendid success everywhere and with it began the long and great career of Verdi and a new and glorious era in Italian opera. In all he composed the 26 operas listed below.

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Our debt to Giuseppe Verdi is great. In this year, the 150th anniversary of his birth, opera houses everywhere are paying homage to his memory with special performances of his familiar and his less familiar operas. The Dublin Grand Opera Society adds its quota of respect by including in the 1963 Festival of Italian Opera, four of his operas — the well-loved *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *Rigoletto* and *Aïda* and also *Macbeth*, lesser-known but one of the Maestro's own favourites.

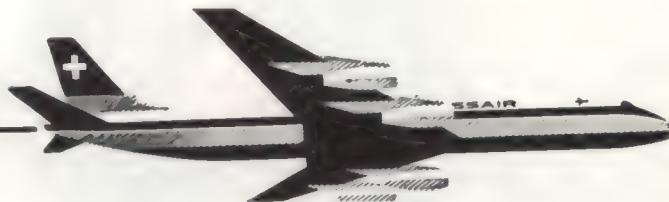
#### **Verdi's Operas and their First Performances**

Oberto, 1839.  
Un Giorno di Regno, 1840.  
\* Nabucco, 1842.  
I Lombardi, 1843.  
† Eranani, 1844.  
† I Due Foscari, 1844.  
Giovanna D'Arco, 1845.  
Alzira, 1845.

Attila, 1846.  
\* Macbeth, 1847.  
I Masnadieri, 1847.  
Il Corsaro, 1848.  
La Battaglia di Legnano, 1849.  
Luisa Miller, 1849.  
\* Rigoletto, 1851.  
\* Il Trovatore, 1853.  
\* La Traviata, 1853.  
I Vespri Siciliani, 1855.  
\* Simon Boccanegra, 1857.  
† Araldo, 1857.  
\* Un Ballo in Maschera, 1859.  
\* La Forza del Destino, 1862.  
\* Don Carlo, 1867.  
\* Aïda, 1871.  
\* Otello, 1887.  
\* Falstaff, 1893.

\* These Operas have been produced by the D.G.O.S.

† These have been produced by the Wexford Festival.



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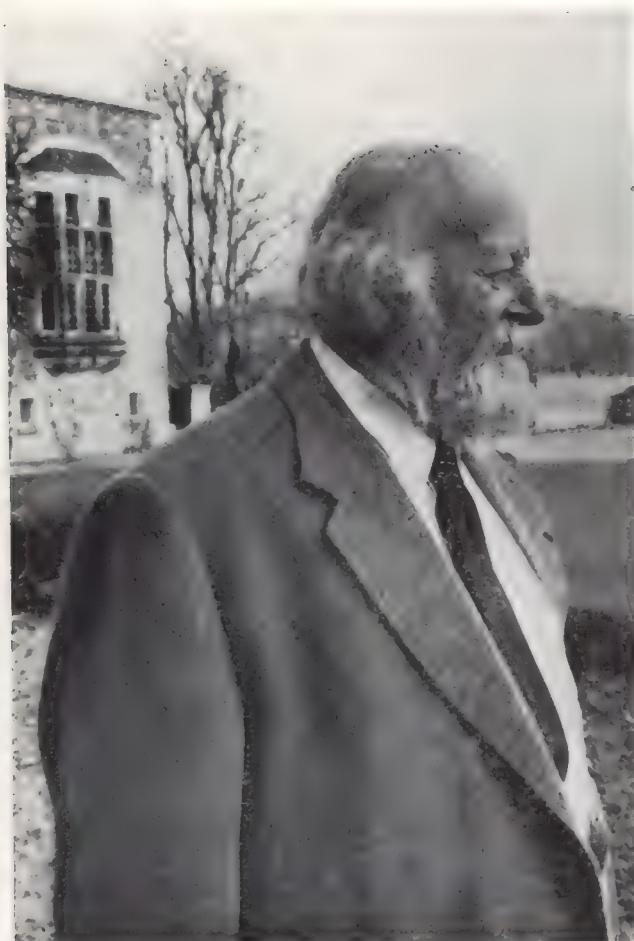
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# A 20th CENTURY MAECENAS



JOHN CHRISTIE  
1882-1962

On 4th July, 1962, John Christie, founder of the Glyndebourne Opera and one of the last of the great private patrons of opera, died. This now world-famous institution was formally established in 1934 soon after his marriage to Audrey Mildmay, baronet's daughter and opera singer, who predeceased him in 1953. A life-long devotee of opera, Christie had a personal vision of "ideal opera in ideal surroundings". His inherited wealth and his enthusiasm and drive enabled him to realise this vision when he built his private opera house as an extension of his country home in a fold of the Sussex Downs some 50 miles from London. This opera house though small and intimate is no dilettante affair — it is furnished with the most modern technical equipment and facilities running even to a second stage for rehearsals which is a replica of the stage on which the operas are performed.

Glyndebourne's founder was fortunate in his early collaborators — Fritz Busch, the conductor, and Carl Ebert, the producer. Theirs was a life-time association. Busch is dead but Ebert still produces

opera at Glyndebourne though Günther Rennert is now Head of Production.

Up to the last war, the Glyndebourne Festival's deficits were met largely by Christie himself — in the post-war years, however, the economic pressure of the rocketing costs of producing opera necessitated aid from the Arts Council and other sources despite the fact that at practically every performance the theatre is sold out at very high prices. In 1954 the Glyndebourne Opera Trust was set up by Christie to perpetuate the tradition he had established.

Opera at Glyndebourne (in the original language, of course) is a sophisticated affair. The guests arrive in evening dress for the performances that begin at 5 p.m. of a summer afternoon. During the long intervals some of them may dine at the house restaurant. Others eat al fresco from the Fortnum and Mason hampers they bring along with them from London. This is followed by a stroll through the lovely lawns and gardens that surround manor and opera house.

The first season in 1934 offered 2 Mozart operas, carefully rehearsed, cast and mounted. As the reper-

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Lynch

toire expanded, Mozart continued to predominate. First departures from the Mozart theme were the now legendary Busch-Ebert productions of Verdi's *Macbeth* and then Donizetti's *Don Pasquale* with Mildmay, Stabile and Borgioli under Vittorio Gui. Later years introduced works by Monteverdi, Gluck, Rossini, Verdi, Debussy, Richard Strauss, as well as by Stravinsky and Britten and a few other latter-day composers. Mozart, however, remains the *clou* of every year's Festival.

Perfection is Glyndebourne's goal. The whole opera is the thing and if "stars" are lucky enough to be invited they must submit to the iron discipline of conductor and producer and to the weeks of intensive rehearsals that Glyndebourne demands before it displays its productions to the public. Conductor and producer reign supreme as might be expected since they have included — besides Busch and Ebert — Gui, Erede, Kubelik and Beecham among the conductors and Rennert and Zeffirelli among the producers. For the décors, artists of the calibre of Oliver Messel, John Piper, Rolf Gérard and Montrésor are enlisted.

The 1963 Glyndebourne Festival Opera opens the 22nd season on 22nd May next with Richard Strauss's

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*Ferdinando d'Ardia Caracciolo  
Editor.*

last opera *Capriccio* to be followed by Beethoven's *Fidelio*; Debussy's *Pélleas et Mélisande*; Monteverdi's *Incoronazione di Poppea*; Mozart's *Nozze di Figaro* and *Zauberflöte*, and Stravinsky's *Rake's Progress*.

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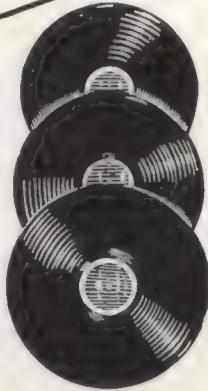
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# Producers

## NAPOLEONE ANNOVAZZI

(Conductor) though born a Florentine completed his musical studies at Venice and began his conducting career at Riga in 1935. Combining work in the fields of symphonic and opera music, he has conducted the Santa Cecilia, Vienna Symphony and Munich Philharmonic Orchestras and the orchestras of Lisbon and Madrid and, in the field of Opera, at the State Operas of Vienna, Cologne, Wiesbaden and Munich and in Lisbon, Barcelona, Naples, Rome as well as at Caracalla. In America he has directed opera at Havana, Mexico and the City Centre, New York. This is his third visit to Dublin.



## OTTAVIO ZIINO

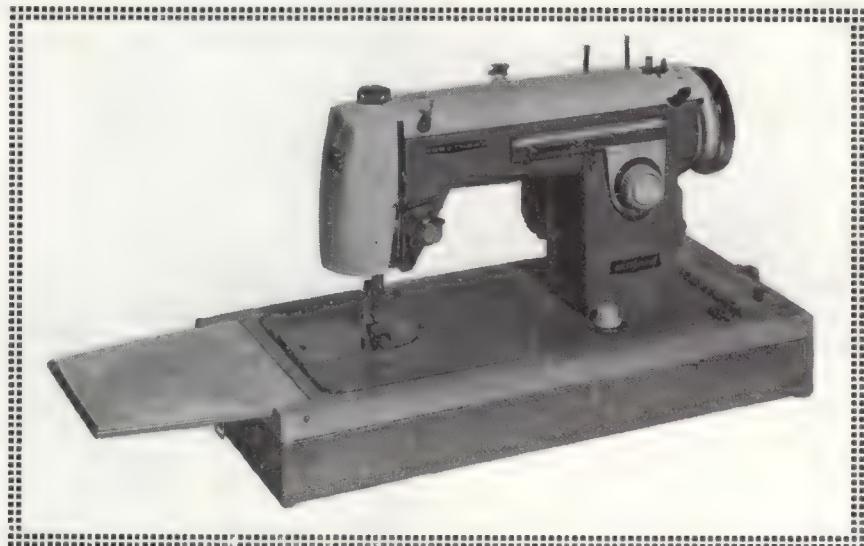
(Composer and Conductor) is now a regular visitor to Dublin. He studied composition with Antonio Savasta at the Conservatoire of Palermo, his native city. At the same time he studied law at the University of Palermo. After this he followed courses in conducting and composition at the S. Cecilia Academy in Rome under Bernardino Molinari and Ildebrando Pizzetti. He then dedicated himself to conducting, both in the theatrical field (Rome Opera House, San Carlo, Naples, Carlo Felice, Genoa, Regio Theatre, Parma, Bellini Theatre, Catania, Grand Theatre, Brescia, Massimo Theatre in Cagliari etc.) and in the symphonic field as well, conducting concerts in the most important institutes of Italy (National Academy of S. Cecilia in Rome, Maggio Musicale, Florence, Societa Scarlatti, Naples, Venice Festival, RAI-Radio Italiana, Massimo, Palermo). He has been active abroad in both operatic and symphonic fields (France, S. America, Germany, Scandinavia, Turkey, Yugoslavia, Holland, Australia and Luxembourg). He is now the resident Director of the Symphonic Orchestra of Sicily. He has recently proved himself as a composer also.



## TRISTANO ILLESBERG

(Conductor) was born in Trieste in 1920. His father was a noted composer whose last composition was the opera *Trittico*, performances of which were conducted by Tristano Illesberg, son, at the Teatro Verdi of Trieste last winter and broadcast by the Italian Radio. The protagonist was Luisa Maragliano. Maestro Illesberg after a distinguished course of musical studies started his musical career very young as répétiteur to Guarnieri (whose pupil he was) and to Marinuzzi, Gui, Serafin and Votto. His career as a conductor in his own right began with *Tosca* at the Politeama Theatre of Trieste and he has since pursued it with success in the classical repertory throughout Italy and in France, Switzerland, Germany, North Africa and North America.



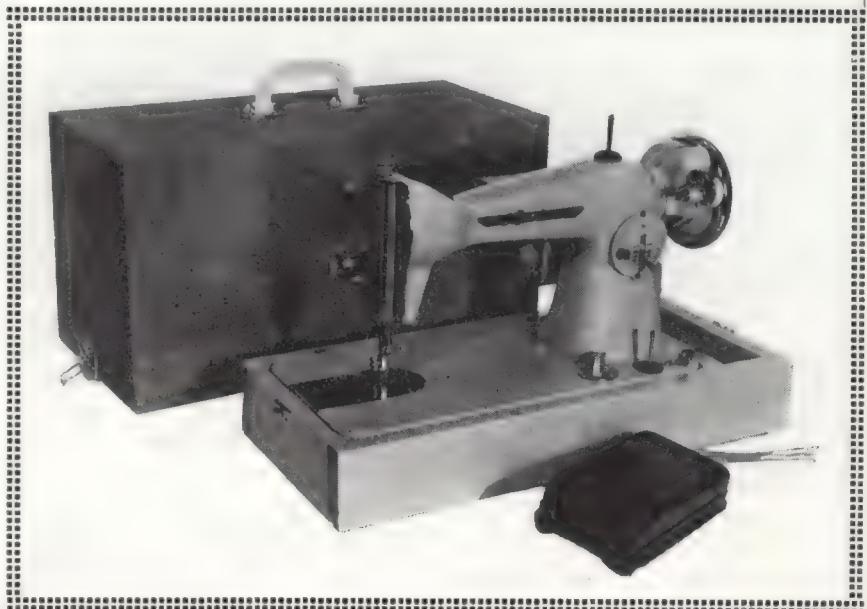


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# Festival Impresario

## CARDENIO BOTTI

(Manager). Maestro Botti's many activities, conductor, composer and man of theatre, are well known in Italy where he has supervised the direction of many of the principal opera houses. He completed his studies at the St. Cecilia Conservatorio in Rome. At the Royal Opera House in Malta he was first conductor for the operas and symphony concerts, and subsequently General Manager. He conducted the St. Cecilia Orchestra in Rome at various concerts in the well known Augusteo Hall. He was subsequently appointed Director of the Teatro Massimo in Palermo and later of the Carlo Felice in Genoa. He has been an adjudicator at numerous contests for singers and composers and has been Director of the Organisation for the co-ordination of the great Opera Houses, controlled by the State. For nine years he has organised the visiting Italian Opera Company for the D.G.O.S. and the benefit of his long experience has considerably aided the success of the Italian Opera Festivals in Dublin.



## Producer

### CARLO ACLY AZZOLINI

(Producer). Studied European literature and history of art at the University of Rome. His musical education was pursued at the Conservatorio in the same City. His work as a Régisseur was interrupted soon after it began at the Fenice Theatre of Venice by the Second World War. It was resumed in 1946 at the Rome Opera and he has worked continuously there since then.

Mr. Azzolini has produced a wide range of Operas—old and modern, these latter including Pizzetti's *Straniero*, Alfano's *Dr. Antonio* and Respighi's *Maria Egiziaca*.

Outside Rome, Mr. Azzolini has acted as producer at the Opera House, Barcelona (*Don Carlos*, *Aïda* and Boito's *Mefistofele*), at the Festival of Wiesbaden as well as in France, Switzerland and North Africa.

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## RICCARDO BOTTINO

(Chorusmaster). After studying pianoforte, composition and orchestral and choral conducting under Schinelli, Bossi and Pedrollo at Parma, Maestro Bottino graduated at the Conservatorio Giuseppe Verdi, Milan. He began his career as an orchestra director and conducted in the major theatres in Italy, besides undertaking extended tours of France, Switzerland, Germany and England. Recently, however, he has devoted himself exclusively to choral conducting in which he has specialized, having acted as chorus master in important official opera seasons in Italy and abroad. He arrived in Dublin for chorus rehearsals two months ago direct from the Teatro Liceo of Barcelona where he was chorusmaster for all operas throughout the four months international opera season there.



## PATRICK SOMERVILLE

Is a Dublin School Teacher. His leisure time is devoted to Music and he has vast experience in dealing with Choral Groups in Dublin. He joined the Music Staff of the D.G.O.S. in 1962 and the high standard achieved by the Chorus this season is due in no small way to the hard work of both himself and his wife, Mrs. Chris Somerville, a noted pianist, both of whom work as a team.



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### MARINA CUCCHIO

(Soprano) is one of the most versatile sopranos in Italy today. Her repertoire covers, of course, the more usual liric and lirico — dramatic soprano roles (including *Floria Tosca*, which she is to sing in Dublin) but also many modern operas. Because of her musicianship and her ability to master new and difficult roles she is much in demand at the Scala for contemporary and unfamiliar operas. Marina Cucchio was the protagonist in Donizetti's *Anna Bolena* when it was produced at the Wexford Festival a few years ago.



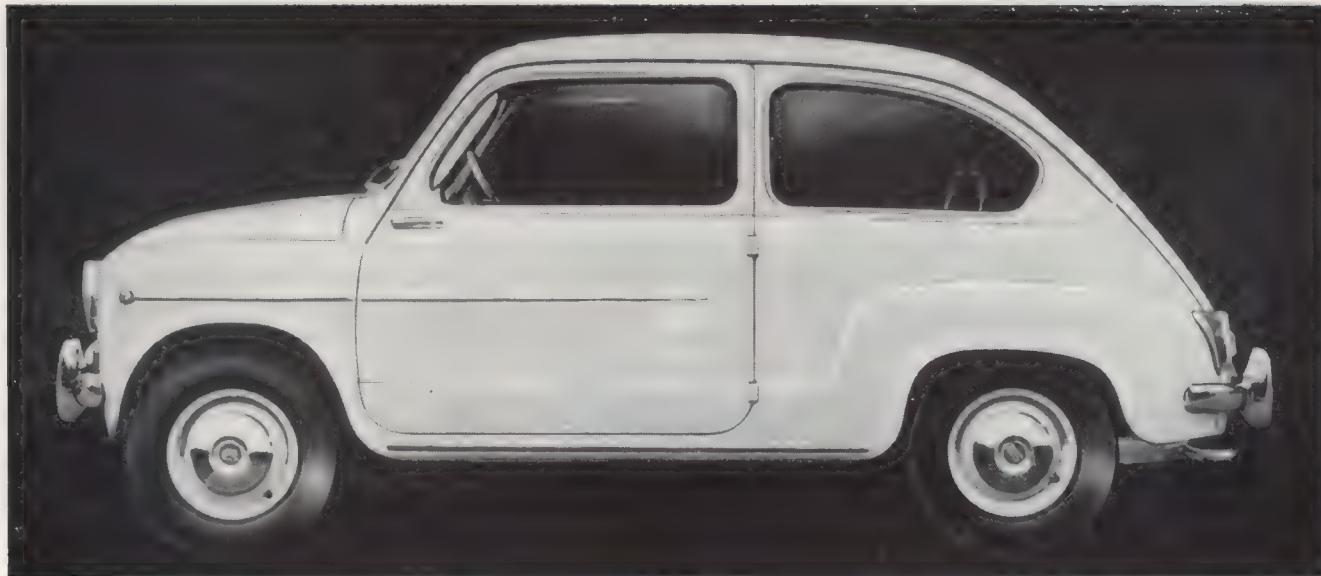
### SOFIA BANDIN

(Soprano) was born in Argentina of Italian parents and was trained in Italy. Her début was made in the famous Colon Theatre of Buenos Aires, where she sings regularly in the annual Italian opera seasons although for the past three years she has been living in Italy. She is, of course, active in all the important Italian opera houses as well as in Spain and Portugal. She is one of the few accepted interpreters of the exacting role of *Lady Macbeth* which she is to sing in Dublin.



### LEILA BERSIANI

(Soprano). Winner of the famous competition in Spoleto's Teatro Sperimentale three years ago, she soon made her début and in a short time appeared at the Opera House, Rome. During a holiday two years ago she attended a special perfecting class directed by Toti Del Monte in Venice. Last year she took part in the Festival of Two Worlds in Spoleto and in the opera season in Yugoslavia. This is her first visit to Dublin where she will sing Oscar in *A Masked Ball*.



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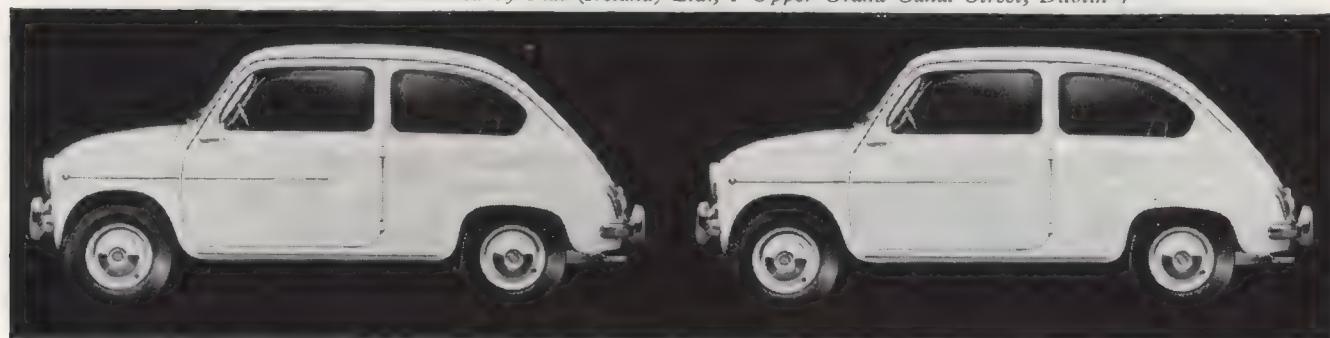
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### LUCIA DANIELI

(Mezzosoprano) was born in Vicenza, near Venice. Following her début at Spoleto, Lucia Danieli soon built up a reputation for her interpretation of the great mezzo roles of Verdi (Amneris, Azucena, Preziosilla, etc.) which she sang many times at the Teatro dell' Opera, Rome, the Scala, Milan, the Communale, Florence, and other musical centres. Her musical activities extend also to the concert field of the Italian Radio and of the Academy of Santa Cecilia. Danieli made a great impression in Dublin last year as Azucena in *Il Trovatore*.



### MARGHERITA RINALDI

(Soprano). Studied in Milan and perfected her style at the school of the famous teacher Ines Adami Corradetti. Was discovered at the Spoleto competition in 1958 where she won first prize. In the Teatro Sperimentale there, which is under the same direction as the Opera of Rome, she made her début in *Lucia de Lammermoor*, obtaining great praise from public and press. She was immediately called to La Scala. In recent years she has been engaged mostly at the Teatro dell' Opera, Rome and has become an established favourite in Dublin for lirico-leggiero roles.



### LUISA MARAGLIANO

(Soprano) was born and studied in Genoa. After her début in Switzerland as Mimi her extraordinary qualities as a dramatic soprano and as a Verdi soprano soon developed. In the few brilliant years of this young soprano's career she has appeared in many of the greater opera houses — to mention but a few — Covent Garden, the State Operas of Berlin and Dresden, at the Arena at Verona as well as in the theatres of Bologna, Parma, Rome, Genoa, Turin and Catania. This will be her second visit to Dublin.



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(Mezzosoprano). Studied in Rome. This intelligent and versatile artist is well known throughout Italy for her fine voice and the exceptional musicianship which enable her to undertake a very wide range of mezzo roles. Most of the important theatres of Italy have engaged her and she has also taken part in opera tournees in England, Scandinavia and Japan.



ADRIANA TORRINI

(Soprano) studied in Genoa where she made her début. She has become a specialist in the secondary roles in the Italian and French repertoires. It is her first visit to Dublin.

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### UGO BENELLI

(Tenor) who comes to Dublin for the first time to sing the role of Edvino in *La Sonnambula*, received his musical training in the finishing school for young opera singers at the Scala in which he won a place after a nation-wide competition. Since his public career began in 1958 he has been active in the most noted opera houses of Europe — Palermo, Genoa, Parma and, of course, the Scala, besides Geneva, Zürich, Munich, Barcelona etc. — and also in North and South America. He has taken part in productions by both Zeffirelli and Visconti and in television opera.

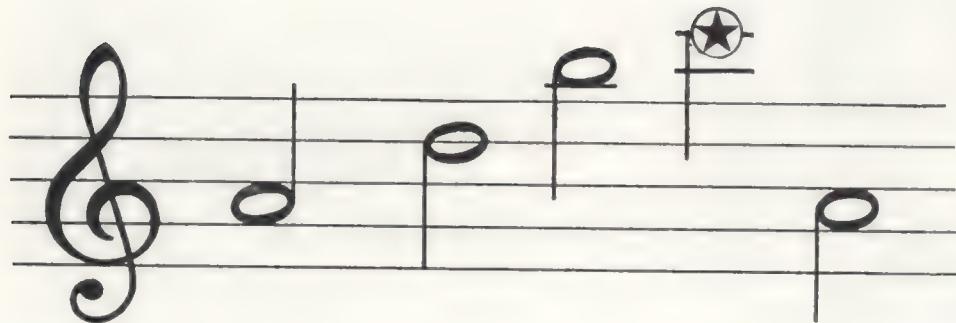
### UMBERTO BORSÒ

(Tenor) made his début at the Teatro Sperimentale of Spoleto in *La Forza del Destino*. He soon passed to the Rome Opera, then to La Fenice, Venice, to the Verdi, Trieste, the Massimo, Palermo, and to the best-known Italian opera houses. He took part in an opera tournee in Australia and New Zealand, and in opera festivals in Egypt, Japan, Spain and Holland. Borsò has just completed a successful three-months engagement at the Metropolitan Opera, New York.



### PIERO CAPPUCCHILLI

(Baritone). Since his début in 1956 Piero Cappuccilli has appeared in practically every Italian opera house of importance as well as at the major theatres of Belgium, Denmark, Spain, France, and Germany, as well as at the Metropolitan, New York. He has sung the leading baritone roles in the long-play recordings with Maria Callas of *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *La Gioconda* and in *The Marriage of Figaro*, and *Don Giovanni*, under Giulini with Sutherland, Schwartzkopf, Sciutti, Taddei etc., and is now one of the most sought after baritones of the day. He makes a very welcome return to Dublin.



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### ◀ PLINIO CLABASSI

(Bass). Since his first appearance here in 1953, Plinio Clabassi has deservedly become most popular with Dublin audiences. In the years between his operatic activities have spread to all important Italian opera houses. He sings regularly at the Scala and at the Rome Opera and he has had great success at recent seasons in North and South America. In the 1963 Festival he returns to sing in several operas. Clabassi also makes many concert and television appearances as well as gramophone recordings.

### DINO DONDI

(Baritone) was born in Bologna in 1925, where he studied singing before his début at the Teatro Nuovo of Milan. Since then he has risen to become one of Italy's leading Verdi baritones and is a regular member of the companies of all the best Italian opera houses, including the Scala and enjoys an enviable reputation in the European capitals and in South America. He comes to Dublin for the exacting role of protagonist in Verdi's *Macbeth* with which his name has been particularly associated ever since he was specially selected for it by the famous Luchino Visconti when the latter produced the opera at the first Festival of Two Worlds at Spoleto in 1958.



### ◀ EDWIN FITZGIBBON

(Tenor) began his studies at the Royal Irish Academy of Music. Played the baritone lead Gellner in *La Wally* (Catalani) as a student there. After further study became Tenor and completed studies under Frederic Cox, Principal of Royal Manchester College of Music. This is his third D.G.O.S. Italian Festival of which he has become a valued member.

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### LORIS GAMBELLI

(Bass). Was born in Rome and studied under famous baritone Riccardo Stracciari. He won the International Singing Competition at Fabriano and there made his début in Donizetti's *La Favourita*. He has since sung in many important Italian opera houses. Abroad he has taken part in the seasons in Madrid and in South America. He has been a frequent and welcome visitor to Dublin for the Italian Festivals.



### GIANGIACOMO GUELFI

(Baritone) Guelfi is almost an alumnus of the Experimental Theatre of Spoleto where he made his bow in 1954. In the interval he has become one of the very greatest of living baritones and an artist of world reputation in Europe, America and the Far East. After his tremendous success in last year's *Nabucco* he returns to sing Scarpia in *Tosca*.



### GIANNI MAFFEO

(Baritone) was born in Vigevano, Northern Italy 27 years ago and pursued his vocal studies at the Liceo Viotti of Vercelli under Mme. Zita Fumagalli. After some concert appearances and an engagement to sing in Paisiello's *Barbiere di Siviglia* at Venice he was successful at the national concursus held annually at the Teatro Nuovo of Milan, which led to a part (Tonio) in *I Pagliacci* at that Theatre. He was engaged by La Scala Milan for the entire season of 1962/1963 — a recognition rarely achieved by a young singer in the first year of his career. Already he has sung at the Scala in *Bohème* and in *Trovatore*. He has also sung at the Vienna State Opera and in the autumn goes to Moscow for engagements there.

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### FERRUCCIO MAZZOLI

(Bass) completed his musical studies at the Bologna Conservatoire and subsequently appeared at the Teatro Sperimentale in Spoleto, where he was immediately noticed for his exceptional voice. After his appearance in this theatre it was not difficult for him to obtain engagements at the principal opera houses, from Rome Opera House to San Carlo in Naples, the Massimo in Palermo, the Communale in Bologna and La Scala and at the San Francisco and Chicago operas. He appeared in Dublin for the first time six years ago, singing in various operas, and immediately became a favourite with the Dublin public.



### CARLO MENIPPO

(Tenor) studied with Maestro Campogalliani at Modena and only two years ago he made his début, like so many other contemporary young singers of note, at the Teatro Nuovo of Milan as Canio in *I Pagliacci*. This launched him on the first stages of a career which promises to be a very successful one and his name is occurring even more frequently on the rosters of the Italian opera seasons.

### GUIDO PASELLA

Is a young baritone from Milan. His initial studies were in Rome (Conservatorio di Santa Cecilia) and later in Milan (Conservatorio Verdi) where he graduated. Made his début at Parma's Teatro Regio and soon he was in all Italian opera houses; Genoa, Turin, Naples, etc., and in the Radio and T.V. opera seasons. Abroad he has taken part in tournees in Brazil, England, France, Germany, Portugal, Switzerland and U.S.A.





### GIUSEPPE di STEFANO

(Tenor) was born near Catania in Sicily. Even though he has never before sung in Ireland this illustrious artiste of world-renown needs no introduction to an Irish audience. Through his many definite recordings of Italian operas the name of di Stefano is a household

one wherever great singing and a great voice are appreciated.

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### LUCIANO PAVAROTTI

(Tenor). This young tenor made his début at the Teatro Communale of Modena in *Bohème* under the direction of Maestro Molinari-Pradelli. From there he rapidly passed through various Italian opera houses, and last year was selected by the eminent conductor Tullio Serafin for the part of the Duke of Mantua in *Rigoletto* (the part he will sing in Dublin) at the great Teatro Massimo of Palermo. His complete success there led to engagements in the more important opera houses in Italy.

### ERNESTO VEZZOSI

(Baritone) made his début at the Teatro Regio in Parma and then passed on to the Fenice in Venice, the Verdi in Trieste, and S. Carlo in Naples and others. Has taken part in tournées in Germany, Holland, Egypt, France, England and Ireland. One of the most versatile and dependable artists in opera.





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# UN BALLO IN MASCHERA

GIUSEPPE VERDI, 1813 - 1901

*Un Ballo in Maschera* belongs to Verdi's later middle period. The première was at Rome in February, 1859. Somma's libretto was based on a play by Scribe about the assassination of Gustavus III of Sweden. As regicide was involved, Verdi found himself in endless difficulties with the Naples political censorship

and the San Carlo Theatre of that city for which the opera was intended. These troubles were responsible for certain incongruities in the plot and its setting as finally fixed and for the transfer of the première to Rome.

---

## ACT I

In the audience chamber of the palace of Riccardo, Governor of Boston, the page Oscar (Coloratura Soprano) submits to Riccardo (Tenor) the list of guests for a masked ball. Riccardo notes the name of Amelia, wife of Renato, his close friend and secretary, whom he secretly loves. In the romance *La rivedra nell'estasi* he rejoices at the prospect of seeing her at the ball. Renato (Baritone) enters to report that he has evidence of a conspiracy against Riccardo's life. When a judge presents for confirmation a sentence of banishment against the sorceress Ulrica, Oscar successfully intercedes for her. The Duke has the whim that all should visit her in disguise that day to learn what the future holds in store.

*Scene 2: Ulrica's Cave.* After some preliminaries, Riccardo, disguised as a fisherman, is astonished to see Amelia (Soprano) arrive. Concealing himself, he hears her tell Ulrica (Contralto) of her love for him-

self and beg the sorceress for a magic potion which would stifle this love and enable her to remain a virtuous wife. Ulrica replies that for the necessary brew Amelia must herself gather certain herbs that grow at the foot of a gibbet. Amelia gone, Oscar and the others arrive. In the barcarolle *Di, tu se fedele* Riccardo expresses amusement at all this hocus-pocus. Ulrica's prophesy to him, however, is that he shall die the victim of the first person to shake his hand. When Renato enters, hand outstretched, Riccardo laughs in disbelief (*E scherzo od è follia* — "It's a silly joke") and so commences the quintet that concludes the Act.

## ACT II

*Midnight.* Amelia, unnerved by the macabre scene, has reached the place of the gibbet. Her dread is expressed in the aria *Ma dall'arido stelo divulsa*. Hither she is followed by Riccardo. Their splendid

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duet follows. Renato comes in hastily to warn Riccardo that the conspirators are at his heels and that he must escape at once. Amelia, silent and heavily veiled, has not been recognised by her husband. Before he goes, Riccardo enjoins on Renato to conduct his companion to the city without speaking or looking on her face. The conspirators pour in, led by Samuel and Tom (Basses). Having missed Riccardo, they insist upon knowing who is the woman that was with him. Fearful for Renato, who resists, Amelia unveils. The ironic amusement of the conspirators is graphically expressed in the music. Outraged by this double betrayal, Renato decides to join the conspiracy and bids the leaders come to his house.

### ACT III

At home, Renato threatens Amelia that for her infidelity he will kill her. While admitting her unwilling love for Riccardo she protests that it was not guilty. Renato appears unmoved but accedes to her supplication (Aria: *Morro, ma prima in grazia*) that she may see her son for the last time. Alone, Renato bitterly turns to the portrait of Riccardo in the aria *Eri tu che macchiavi*. "You," he says, "are the guilty

one ; it is you, not Amelia, who shall die to expiate the wrong."

When the conspirators come, he tells them he knows their aims and is now their ally. Amelia, returning, is forced by her husband to be the instrument of fate in drawing lots for who shall strike the fatal blow. The name she draws is Renato's. The sustained tension is broken by the sprightly Oscar bringing invitations to the masked ball, in which the conspirators see the opportunity of executing their plot.

The second scene shows Riccardo in his study. He has realized that honour requires him to renounce Amelia and he writes the order sending Renato (with Amelia) on a mission to England. Riccardo will see her for the last time at the ball to which the scene now changes. The conspirators are seeking to identify the Duke among the masked dancers. Renato coaxes the secret of Riccardo's disguise from Oscar after the latter has sung the brilliant solo *Saper vorreste*. Meanwhile, to the elegant background music of a mazurka Amelia, who has recognised Riccardo, tensely beseeches him to escape from the danger closing in on him. But Renato has overheard and quickly strikes. The dying Riccardo proclaims Amelia's innocence and, having publicly forgiven his enemies, expires.

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## VINCENZO BELLINI

1802—1835

# LA SONNAMBULA

VINCENZO BELLINI, 1802-1835

The romantic operas of Vincenzo Bellini had an enormous popularity in the nineteenth century, the Golden Age of Italian Opera, when beauty of tone (*bel canto*) and distinction of style were more highly esteemed than dramatic expression. Bellini's melodies, brilliant and elegiac by turn — but always elegant —

furnished abundant opportunities to the great florid singers of the past.

Felice Romani was the librettist for "La Sonnambula" as for most of Bellini's operas.

The first performance was at Milan in March, 1831.

The setting is a remote village in the mountains of Switzerland in the early nineteenth century.

## ACT I

In the village piazza the people are en fête to celebrate the betrothal of Elvino, a well-to-do young farmer, and Amina, foster child of Teresa, proprietress of the mill. Only Lisa (Soprano) is unhappy for she also is in love with Elvino and so she rejects the attentions being paid to her by Alessio (Tenor), who is her ardent admirer. Hailed by a chorus in praise of her beauty (which serves to inflame Lisa's jealousy further) Amina (Soprano) enters accompanied by Teresa (Mezzo-soprano). In the gracious air *Come per me sereno* Amina expresses her gratitude to her friends and her own great happiness.

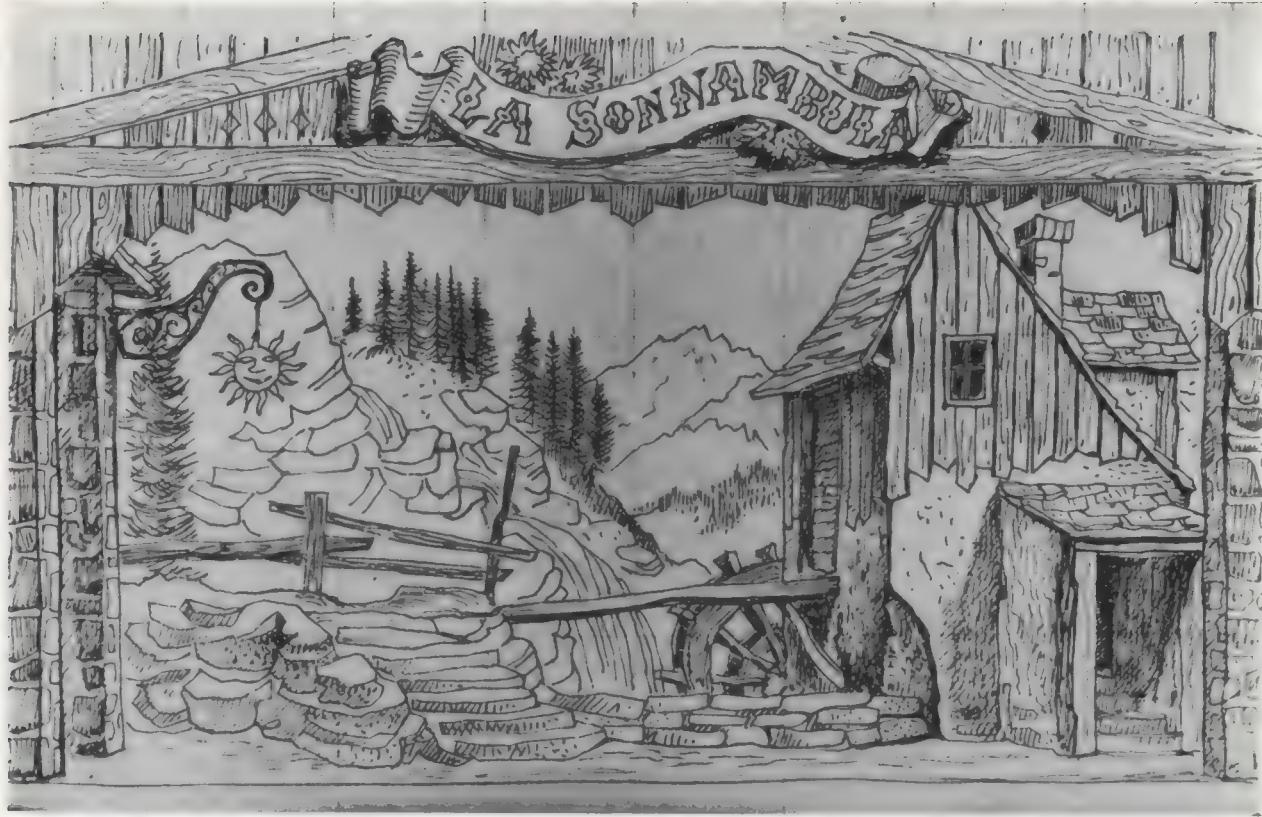
The notary arrives, soon followed by Elvino (Tenor) himself. After the brief ceremony of betrothal Elvino places the ring on Amina's finger introducing with the words *Prendi : l'anel ti dono* a duet for soprano and tenor set in Bellini's characteristic long-flowing melodies. The sound of horses heralds the arrival of a stranger. Though unknown to the villagers he is, in fact, Count Rodolfo (Bass), the son and heir of the lord of the manor, who has returned after a long absence. Evening is approaching and he decides to remain overnight at the inn rather than risk at that hour the precipitous mountain road ascending to his castle. In the romance *Vi ravviso o luoghi ameni* Rodolfo recalls the days spent here in his youth. Then, passing from such nostalgic memories, he pays extravagant compliments to the beauty of the bride-to-be.

As night falls the people grow restive, explaining to the Count that their anxiety to get home is because the spot is haunted by a phantom figure which lately

has been appearing regularly after dusk. They describe this figure in the chorus *A fosco cielo*. Amused by this superstitious tale Rodolfo retires to the inn. When left alone with Amina, Elvino taxes her with a too ready response to the stranger's gallantries. Amina, however, soothes his jealous feelings and they bid each other a tender good-night in the duet beginning *Son geloso del zeffiro amante* — "I am jealous even of the breezes that caress your hair."

## ACT II

A room at the inn. Lisa conducts her guest to his room. She is in coquettish mood and tells him that the villagers have already recognised him and will shortly arrive to pay their feudal respects. Startled by a noise from outside Lisa exits hastily, dropping her scarf as she goes. Through the window Amina enters dressed in her white night attire. She murmurs of Elvino in her dreams. Rodolfo realises at once that she is sleep-walking and guesses that this must be the phantom that has so frightened the village. Not wishing to awaken the girl, he resolves this embarrassing situation by withdrawing. When the villagers enter to greet their overlord, their surprise at finding Amina there turns to amusement. Lisa venomously runs off to fetch Elvino. Amina, awakening, is at a loss to explain to the raging Elvino the very compromising situation in which she finds herself and anxiously protests her innocence (*D'un pensiero e d'un accento*). During the long ensemble that ensues Teresa picks up the scarf Lisa had dropped and



places it over Amina's shoulders. The scene ends with Elvino's repudiation of his bride-to-be.

### ACT III

*Scene I* : A wood beside the village. A number of Amina's friends are on their way to the Castle. From their chorus, *Qui la selva è più folta*, we learn that they are going to ask the Count to convince Elvino of Amina's innocence. They rehearse how they will state the case. Amina enters as they leave. She is escorted by Teresa who also wishes to bring her to the Count to beg his intercession with Elvino. The latter now approaches and unaware of Amina, exclaims his despair in the aria *Tutto è sciolto* — "All is now lost to me". Seeing Amina he tears his ring from her finger. The villagers return from their errand but the angry Elvino is deaf to their assurances that the Count will testify that Amina is guiltless. As the unhappy scene closes all disperse.

*Scene II* : In this scene we return to the piazza. A slender wooden footbridge connects the upper windows of the mill with the piazza. Alessio is vainly pressing his suit with Lisa but, Elvino, on the rebound, has already announced that he will indeed marry Lisa without delay. Count Rodolfo now takes the matter in hands, explaining to Elvino and the villagers about Amina's sleepwalking (*V'han certuni che dormendo*). All, however, remain sceptical as sleepwalking

is a phenomenon outside their experience. Darkness is falling and Teresa appears to ask for quiet as the unhappy Amina is now sleeping. Turning to Elvino she displays, in proof of Lisa's duplicity, the scarf belonging to Lisa which she had picked up in the Count's room. Elvino feels doubly betrayed and Lisa is much embarrassed. The night has grown darker and in a moment of dramatic silence Rodolfo points to the figure of Amina emerging, lamp in hand, from a dormer window of the mill. Tensely and fearfully they watch while Amina, moving as in a trance, essays the hazardous crossing of the narrow bridge that, crazy and insecure, spans the mill-race below. Though a rotting plank breaks under her foot, Amina safely reaches the piazza. Still dreaming, she prays to Heaven that Elvino may return to her. Here occurs the famous piece *Ah! non credea mirarti* as she mourns the loss of her pretty ring and draws from her bosom the faded posy that Elvino had given her only yesterday. Elvino, convinced at last, gently restores the ring to her finger. Awakening, Amina finds Elvino and Teresa beside her. Her great joy is rapturously expressed in the brilliant *cavatina*, *Ah! non giunge uman pensiero* — one of the most elaborate (and most difficult) showpieces in the coloratura repertoire. With the chorus embroidering the soprano's music the opera comes to its scintillating and very happy ending.

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# RIGOLETTO

GIUSEPPE VERDI, 1813-1901

This opera was composed by the 38-year-old Verdi for the Fenice Theatre, Venice, where it had its première in March, 1851. It was the first of his long series of world successes and remains firmly in the repertory as one of the most popular of all operas. The libretto by Franco Maria Piave is an adaptation

of Hugo's *Le Roi s'amuse*. To satisfy the strict Austrian censorship of the day, which would not tolerate a public representation of attempted regicide, the plot was transferred from the Court of France to the ducal palace at Mantua.

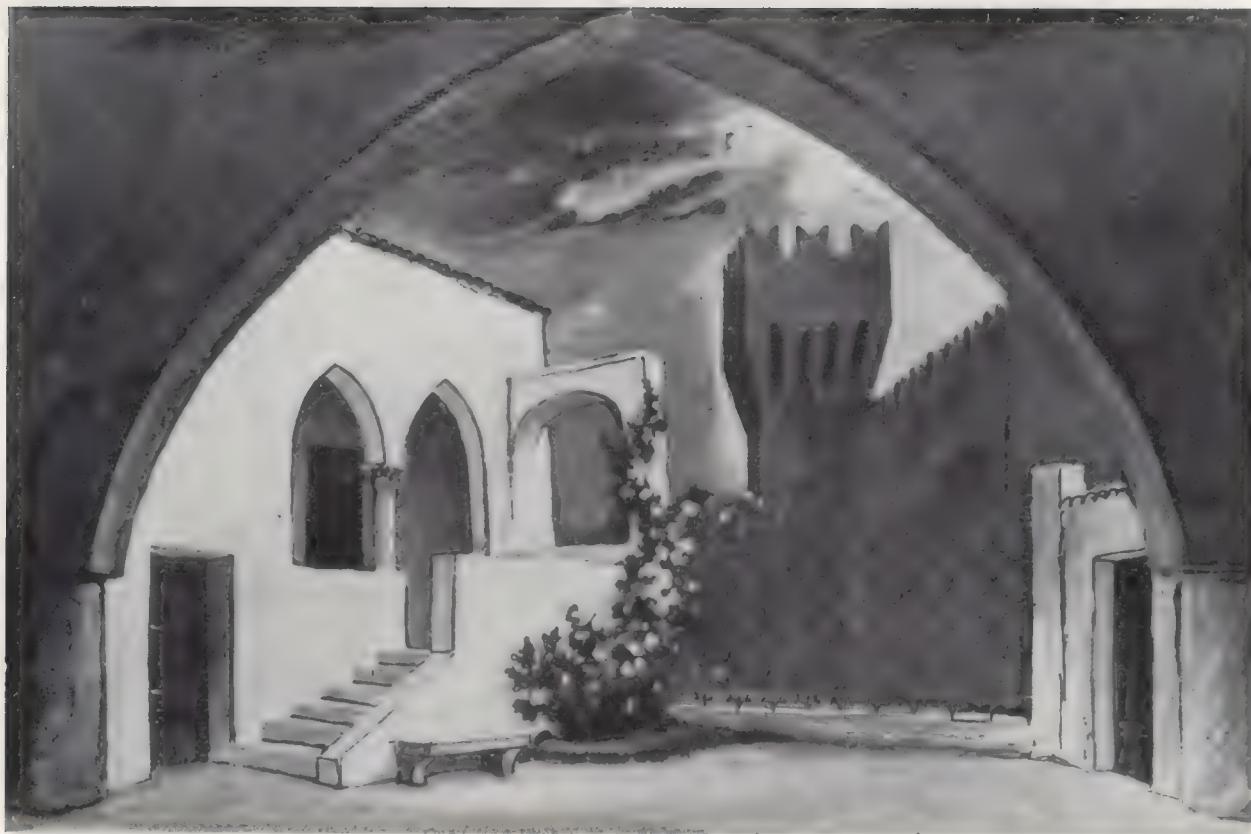
## ACT I

After a short orchestral prelude the curtain rises on a ball in the ducal palazzo. The dissolute Duke of Mantua (Tenor) enters telling a courtier, Borsa, of his latest infatuation — this time with an unknown girl whom he has noticed in church every feast day. Just now, however, he is openly flirtatious with the Countess Ceprano (Mezzo-soprano) to the obvious annoyance of her husband. In the flippant aria *Questa o quella* ("This one or that one") the Duke declares that all women are fair game to him if only they are pretty. Ceprano (Bass) is taunted by Rigoletto, (Baritone), the Court jester, a hunchback, whose privileged gibes all the courtiers must endure. Cynically Rigoletto suggests to the Duke that the affair with the Countess would be furthered if the husband were made away with. Rigoletto wanders off and Marullo (Bass) amuses the others with the story that the buffoon has an *inamorata*! In this they see a chance of revenge on their tormentor. Now Monterone (Baritone) forces his way in to denounce the Duke, whose latest victim was the old man's daughter. He too is cruelly mocked by Rigoletto, but before being dragged away the old man launches a father's curse on the hunchback, who is left cringing in superstitious fear.

## ACT II

The double setting shows a street and, opening off it, the courtyard of Rigoletto's house wherein his

treasured daughter Gilda (Soprano) is kept in strict seclusion. Rigoletto enters still brooding on Monterone's curse which haunts his mind. He is thinking of the daughter whom the courtiers have taken to be his mistress. A sinister figure emerges from the shadows. It is Sparafucile (Bass), a professional hired assassin. To Sparafucile's offer of services at a reasonable fee Rigoletto replies he has no present need of them. Alone, in the splendid aria *Pari siamo*, his jesting thrown aside, Rigoletto reflects bitterly on his deformity and the ignominy of his employment in the Duke's household. A very moving duet ensues between Gilda and himself in which memories of her dead mother are recalled. But the Duke has discovered Gilda's dwelling to which he now gains entry while Rigoletto is still in the house by bribing Giovanna (Mezzo-soprano), Gilda's duenna. He remains concealed in the courtyard. As he leaves, Rigoletto cautions Giovanna once more to guard his treasured Gilda well. When he is gone, the Duke emerges to tell Gilda that he is Gualtier Maldè, the supposed student whom she has often noticed in the church. A love duet follows (*E il sol dell'anima*). The Duke departs and in the coloratura aria *Caro nome* the young girl muses on her first love. Outside, the courtiers are gathering for the abduction that Ceprano has planned for his revenge. By means of a trick Rigoletto, blindfolded, is involved in the escapade, not suspecting its purpose. When he discovers the



Scene from Act II

outrage he recalls the curse and the curtain falls to his anguished cry *La maledizione!*

### ACT III

In the romance *Parmi veder le lagrime* the Duke laments the disappearance of Gilda. The courtiers, however, come to tell him of the trick played on Rigoletto and that Gilda is already in the palace. After the Duke's exit, in search of Gilda, Rigoletto appears distractedly searching for his daughter suspecting her to be with the Duke. His appeals to the courtiers are received with jeers until they realise the girl they have abducted is not his mistress but his daughter. When the distraught Gilda rushes in Rigoletto, suddenly invested with great dignity, inveighs against the baseness of these courtiers and furiously orders them from his presence (*Corteggianni vil razza dannata*). Intimidated by the change in Rigoletto, the courtiers go and Rigoletto hears from his daughter the story of her abduction. The Act concludes in a blazing duet, Rigoletto vowing vengeance on the Duke while Gilda, fearful for her lover, seeks to soften his anger.

### ACT IV

Another double scene; Sparafucile's lonely inn and beside it the banks of the river Mincio. The Duke

has found another charmer, Maddalena (Mezzosoprano), the sister of Sparafucile. Rigoletto has brought Gilda to witness for herself her lover's perfidy. Disguised this time as a soldier, the Duke is drinking and gambling. Debonairly he sings of the fickleness of women (*La donna è mobile*). This aria leads into the great quartet. At its conclusion Rigoletto, sending Gilda away, summons Sparafucile and hires him to murder the stranger in the inn, the body to be delivered to himself in a sack. A storm comes up. The Duke decides to remain overnight at the inn. Maddalena, who has fallen for the young man's charm, endeavours to dissuade her brother, suggesting that if he substituted another victim he might still claim the reward. Gilda has, however, stolen back and overhearing the conversation of the pair, resolves to save her lover by exchanging her own life for his. Thus it is she who becomes the victim and it is her body, enclosed in the sack, that is delivered to her father. Rigoletto, his vengeance satisfied, as he thinks, is about to consign his burden to the river when the voice of the Duke reaches him in a reprise of *La donna è mobile*. He tears open the sack and the dying Gilda is revealed to him. With her last breath she begs forgiveness for her lover and herself. The Opera ends with the crashing chords of the curse — *La maledizione* — which has exacted the full penalty.

# MACBETH

GIUSEPPE VERDI, 1813-1901

Verdi wrote *Macbeth* under contract for the historic Teatro della Pergola (still functioning) in Florence where it received its first performance on 14 March, 1847. Composed five years after *Nabucco* and four before *Rigoletto*, the original version of the opera belongs to Verdi's early middle period. He re-fashioned it for Paris in 1865 and the Paris version is now the only one used.

*Macbeth* has not been seen in Dublin for generations. It was, however, performed here in 1859 with the great soprano Pauline Viardot-Garcia as Lady Macbeth and Arditi as conductor. The first professional performance in England was the now historic Busch-Ebert production at Glyndebourne in 1938.

Verdi was a most ardent and lifelong admirer of the plays of William Shakespeare to which he was

irresistibly attracted. *Macbeth* was the first of the Shakespeare Plays he used for an opera. Much later he went to Shakespeare for his *Otello* and *Falstaff*—produced in the D.G.O.S. Italian Festivals of 1959 and 1960, respectively. The composer himself completed the libretto in prose turning it over to Franco Maria Piave for versification.

To the preparation of the opera for the first performance Verdi devoted infinite care, wrote copious instructions and demanded endless rehearsals. The opera adheres closely to Shakespeare's text — at times the well-known words and phrases are rendered almost verbatim — though in order to reduce the work to the time dimensions of an opera, several scenes had to be shortened and others omitted.

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## ACT I

*Scene 1* : After a short orchestral prelude prefiguring the music of the sleepwalking scene, the curtain rises to reveal a "blasted heath" and a whole chorus of witches. Macbeth (Baritone) and Banquo (Bass) enter. They are returning from a campaign against King Duncan's enemies. Macbeth is greeted by the fantastic creatures successively as Thane of Glamis, Thane of Cawdor and King of Scotland while Banquo is hailed as "No King, but father of Kings". The witches vanish leaving Macbeth and Banquo to muse over the meaning of these strangely exciting words. Messengers come to announce to Macbeth that the King had invested him with the lands and titles of the Thane of Cawdor to succeed the last holder who has been beheaded for treason. The witches return to join in a dance and a satirical chorus before the scene changes.

*Scene 2* is the Courtyard of Macbeth's castle where Lady Macbeth (Soprano) reads (parlando), with growing excitement, a letter from Macbeth giving an account of his strange encounter with the witches, their prophecies of his future greatness and the swift realisation of one of them. She launches into the vigorous apostrophe to her absent husband "*Vieni, t'affretta! accendere ti vo quel freddo core!*" ("I will chastise with the vigour of my tongue all that impedes thee from the golden round . . ."). Thus she reveals herself as the determined ambitious wife who drives her less resolute spouse on to greater things. Fate presents her with her opportunity as a Messenger enters to announce that King Duncan will pass that night in her house and she resolves upon his murder. In the fiendish cabaletta "*Or tutti sorgete, ministri infernali!*" Lady Macbeth calls on the spirits of hell to aid her plan and to cloak the deed in darkness so that the "keen knife see not the wound it makes".

Macbeth now enters and between them in a few cryptic phrases the regicide is planned. Duncan (a silent part) with his suite pass through, followed by Lady Macbeth. After Macbeth's familiar soliloquy "*Is this a dagger that I see before me?*" ("*Mi si affaccia un pugnale?*") he is re-joined by his wife. Macbeth enters the King's chamber and stabs him to death. As in Shakespeare, however, the now terrified Macbeth shrinks from obeying his wife's command to return the dagger to the chamber and incriminate the grooms by smearing them with the old man's blood. It is Lady Macbeth herself who carries out this macabre act. Verdi required this duet to be sung "*sotto voce e cupo*" — in a suppressed and veiled tone to convey the tension of the scene.

At the sound of repeated knockings at the portal, Lady Macbeth drags her husband away to their own apartments just before Macduff (Tenor) and Banquo enter and go in search of the King. On the discovery of the murder an exciting ensemble (with chorus) ensues in which the several elements express their varying emotions the King's murder has evoked.

## ACT II

*Scene 1* : In a hall in the Castle, Macbeth broods over the witches' words to Banquo — "No King, but father of Kings". Lady Macbeth re-assures him that by his flight to England Malcolm, Duncan's son, has incriminated himself and left the field to Macbeth. She bids him take courage and forget the past: "What's done, cannot be undone". But they see Banquo and Fleance, his son, as a threat to their position and decide that both must be killed. When she is alone, Lady Macbeth, in the magnificent aria "*La luce langue*", reflects gloomily for a moment on the path of crime they have chosen but passes quickly to exult in the prospects of her royal state.

*Scene 2* is in the park of the Castle where Macbeth's hired assassins lie in wait to kill Banquo and his son. The prospective victims enter and Banquo in the aria "*Studia il passo, mio figlio*" tells his son of his premonitions of danger. The assassins kill Banquo but Fleance escapes.

*Scene 3* reveals a banquet scene of somewhat enforced gaiety. Macbeth is hailed as King by his lieges and at his desire Lady Macbeth sings a toast to the guests in the flamboyant brindisi, "*Si colmi il calice di vino eletto*". One of the assassins calls Macbeth aside to report the killing of Banquo and the escape of Fleance. Returning to his guests Macbeth laments the absence from the feast of Banquo "that valiant man" whose vacant place at the table he will, he says, occupy himself. But when he turns to the chair he finds it occupied by the blood-boltered ghost of the murdered man which is, however, invisible to the others. Macbeth is betrayed into a frenzied

denial of his guilt, "Thou canst not say I did it. Never shake thy gory locks at me!". He regains composure somewhat under the contempt of his wife's tongue but Lady Macbeth's efforts to distract the guests are of small avail. The assembly breaks up as in a most effective chorus the guests express their dark suspicions — "This land has become a den of criminals." Macbeth decides to seek out the witches and learn more of the future from them.

## ACT III

We meet the witches once more on their heath. At Macbeth's demands to know his destiny, the witches' incantations conjure up a series of apparitions to a background of atmospheric music. The helmeted head of a warrior bids Macbeth beware of Macduff. Then the ghost of a bloody child bids him "Be bloody, bold and resolute; laugh to scorn the power of man, for none of woman born can harm Macbeth!". Another tells him that he has nought to fear until "great Birnam Wood to high Dunsinane hill shall come against him". Macbeth's rising spirits are, however, soon quenched. He falls into a state of terror and swoons away at the final vision of a succession of eight Kings all resembling Banquo and of Banquo himself who shows Macbeth in a mirror the long line of Kings — Banquo's descendants — that will follow.

Lady Macbeth coming in searching of her husband is told of his visions. Once again she screws up his failing courage. In a vigorous duet they resolve that Macduff and all Banquo's issue must be eliminated.

## ACT IV

*Scene 1* is a deserted place on the Scottish border near Birnam Wood where fugitives from the tyranny of Macbeth's rule bewail the plight of their native Scotland. Their moving chorus "*Patria oppressa! il dolce nome*" is strongly reminiscent of that other chorus from *Nabucco* from which it derives both musically and in patriotic feeling. It is followed by the only tenor aria on the entire opera — Macduff's beautiful "*Ah! la paterna mano*" where he mourns his dead wife and children, Macbeth's victims, and his own helpless state as a fugitive. He swears vengeance on their murderer.

Malcolm, son of Duncan, enters at the head of a troop of English soldiers who are marching against Macbeth. The fugitives join with them and each soldier is bidden to cut himself a branch from Birnam Wood to mask their advance on Macbeth's position. Malcolm and Macduff join in a warlike chorus.

*Scene 2* in Macbeth's castle introduces the great musical moment of the opera — the sleep-walking scene. Although formally akin to the "mad scene" which was traditionally almost *de rigueur* in an earlier



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period of opera, Verdi's (and, of course, Shakespeare's) sleep-walking scene has a relevance and an authentic dramatic character. In it the soprano in traversing a whole gamut of emotions must employ tone qualities to match and cope with music ranging from C flat below to a high D flat on the last phrase, sung pianissimo and noted by Verdi *fil di voce*.

Lady Macbeth, her tough spirit broken, enters and setting down her lighted taper tries to wash imagined blood from her hands — "Out, out, damned spot!". "All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand, nor all great Neptune's ocean wash the blood from it." Then, to her spouse, as she relives the horror of the night of Duncan's murder — "Fie, my lord, fie! A soldier and afeared!" and finally, "To bed! To bed! — What's done cannot be undone"

as she fancies she hears again that fateful knocking on the door.

In the last scene nemesis overtakes Macbeth. Almost with indifference he receives the news of his wife's death and, still confident in the witches' deceptive prophecies, he prepares to face the coming assault of Malcolm and Macduff and their forces. Then Birnam Wood seems to close in upon him as the soldiers approach and his last hope fails when, confronted by Macduff, he learns from his adversary that he had not been born of woman but was "from his mother's womb untimely ripped".

Macduff strikes him down. The battle music is in the form of a fugue and the opera ends with a chorus of thanksgiving and of homage to Malcolm the lawful King of Scotland.



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# TOSCA

GIACOMO PUCCINI, 1858-1924

This melodrama of Puccini has been called an operatic thriller. At any rate, its story has the strong flavour of the Italian *verismo* school. The lurid plot was drawn by the librettists Illica and Giacosa from the Sardou play which Bernhardt made famous.

The time is given precisely as June, 1800, and the characters have some relation to real historical figures of the period. Italy was then divided. The French

under Napoleon occupied the North while Rome, from which they had only recently been dislodged, was held for the Royal House of Naples and Sicily whose Queen, Maria Carolina, sister of Marie Antoinette, is named in the opera but does not appear.

“Tosca” received its first production in January, 1900, at the old Costanzi Theatre (now the Teatro dell’ Opera), Rome. The setting is Rome itself.

## ACT I

With three tremendous chords from the orchestra, representing the brutality of the character of Scarpia, who dominates the opera, the curtain rises on Bernini’s Church of Sant’ Andrea della Valle, Rome. The chapel of the Attavanti family is on the right. A dishevelled figure enters hastily. It is Cesare Angelotti (bass), an important prisoner of State, who has just escaped from the prison of Castel Sant’ Angelo. He searches for the key to the Attavanti chapel and finds it at the foot of a statue of the Madonna where it had been hidden for him by his sister, the Marchesa Attavanti. As he disappears inside the chapel the Sacristan (baritone), a comic figure, hobbles in. Noon strikes and as the Sacristan concludes his Angelus, Mario Cavaradossi (tenor), a painter and Tosca’s lover, enters to resume his painting of the Madonna. It is a blonde Madonna whose colouring and features reproduce those of the Marchesa Attavanti whom the painter had observed while at her prayers in the chapel. Disregarding the mutterings of the Sacristan who is scandalised by the painter’s irreverence, Cavaradossi sings the aria *Recondita armonia* as he muses on the contrast between the fair subject of his painting and the dark beauty of his beloved Flora Tosca.

When the Sacristan has left Angelotti emerges and asks the help of his friend and political sympathiser, Cavaradossi. Just then the voice of Tosca herself

is heard outside. As it grows more impatient, the painter hurries Angelotti back to his hiding place, pressing his own basket of food into the hungry fugitive’s hand. When finally admitted Tosca is plainly ruffled by her lover’s delay while the voices she has heard alert a suspicion that his companion may have been a lady — perhaps the Marchesa Attavanti whose features she suddenly recognises on the canvas. She makes quite a scene of jealousy and temper — Flora Tosca was not for nothing the great prima donna of her day — until mollified by Cavaradossi’s endearments and the promise of an assignation at his villa that evening. (Duet — *Qual occhio al mondo*). She leaves the Church and Angelotti re-emerges. Cavaradossi directs him to his villa outside Rome where there is a dried-up well in the garden as a safe refuge should the place be searched. They exit hastily. The Sacristan enters, disappointed to find the painter gone and nobody to hear the great news — the (premature) report of Napoleon’s defeat at Marengo — to celebrate which there is to be a *Te Deum* in the Church and a public holiday. Choristers and worshippers begin to assemble but all are visibly terrified by the sudden appearance (announced by the three great chords with which the opera opened) of Baron Scarpia (baritone), the dreaded Chief of the Roman police. He and his bailiffs have traced Angelotti to the Church. A search of the Attavanti Chapel yields a fan bearing the Attavanti crest and an empty lunch basket. The

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Sacristan admits the latter to be Cavaradossi's and that, though the basket is empty now, the painter had said that he would eat nothing that day. Scarpia at once connects Cavaradossi with the prisoner's escape. When Tosca re-appears, Scarpia hopes by working on her jealousy to discover from her something of the painter's movements. With the evidence of the crested fan which he pretends to have found beside the painter's easel, Scarpia suggests to Tosca (already disconcerted by finding the painter gone and his work abandoned) that her lover has met the Marchesa Attavanti in the Church and has already taken her to the villa. This provokes a violent outburst from Tosca. As she leaves Scarpia orders that she be followed.

The ritual of the *Te Deum* of Thanksgiving begins with tolling of bells and booming of canon. A Cardinal officiates. Against the swelling music of the sacred words, the voice of Scarpia is heard in unholy counterpoint as he declares himself ready to renounce his hopes of heaven if he could send Cavaradossi to his death and have Tosca for himself.

## ACT II

In the Farnese Palace in Rome Scarpia sups and muses with relish on his hoped-for conquest of Tosca whose voice reaches him from the Queen's apartments in the music of the Cantata celebrating the victory. Spoletta (tenor), a police agent, reports that a search of Cavaradossi's villa yielded no trace of Angelotti. The painter has, however, been held and Scarpia orders him to be brought in for questioning. Cavaradossi tells nothing. Tosca has also been summoned by Scarpia and arrives as her lover is sent for further interrogation under torture in an adjoining room. Unnerved by Scarpia's relentless pressure and by the cries of her lover from the torture room, Tosca breaks down and betrays the secret of Angelotti's hide-out — *Nel poggio nel giardino* — "In the well in the garden." By telling Scarpia what he wants to know, she also incriminates her lover for abetting the prisoner's escape for which death is the penalty.

When the painter is brought in again — now limp and bleeding — he only upbraids Tosca for her betrayal and openly exults ("Vittoria!") when Spoletta brings the news that Napoleon had triumphed and not been defeated at Marengo. His words seal his fate and he is dragged away.

Scarpia now resumes his game of cat-and-mouse with Tosca. Blandly he makes his offer — she can save her Cavaradossi by surrendering to himself. Tosca's despair and revulsion at the infamous proposal are expressed in the aria — possibly the most beautiful in modern Italian opera — *Vissi d'arte, vissi d'amore*. In this so-called "Prayer" Tosca asks why she, who had lived only for love and for music and had harmed

no living soul should be abandoned by Heaven to grief and shame like this.

Scarpia awaits her answer. Acquiescence is finally wrung from her as the executioner's drums are heard outside and Spoletta awaits Scarpia's orders for the disposal of the painter. But Tosca makes a condition — she must have safe-conducts across the frontier for both herself and Cavaradossi. Almost too readily Scarpia agrees and in her hearing instructs Spoletta that while the painter's execution must go through, it will be a "simulated" one — "as we did in the Palmieri case." While Scarpia writes the passports Tosca, leaning for support against the supper table, sees her opportunity. Grasping a knife from the table she is ready for Scarpia when he approaches her and plunges it into his heart. She watches his death struggles without remorse — "Die . . . and may thy soul be damned!" Only when at last he is still does she relent and cry: "Now could I forgive him." After rising the safe-conduct from the stiffening fingers, Tosca pauses for a moment to reflect that before this man whom she has killed all Rome had trembled — *Davanti a lui tremava tutta Roma!*"

With a macabre touch of theatre — Flora Tosca was an actress — she carries two lighted candles from the supper table and places them beside the corpse and then a crucifix on his breast before stealing from the room.

## ACT III

Before daylight on the battlements of the Castel Sant' Angelo. The sound of sheep bells and the song of a shepherd boy are heard as he drives his flock to graze. The bells of Rome herald the dawn which will reveal the Eternal City and St. Peter's in the distance. Introduced by a long orchestral passage we now reach the famous aria — "*E lucevan le stelle*" — as Cavaradossi awaiting his execution writes his farewell to Flora Tosca. As it ends Flora herself hurries joyfully in. There ensues an ecstatic duet beginning with her dramatic description of her killing of Scarpia and of how she has won freedom for both of them. He kisses the soft hands ("*O dolci mani!*") that she had stained with blood for him. Then hastily she coaches Cavaradossi for his rôle in the "simulated" execution that must take place. Fretfully she waits as the firing squad takes its position and the shots ring out. Cavaradossi falls. When the soldiers have marched away she gives the signal to rise. But there is no response. The bullets were real and Cavaradossi is dead. Scarpia has cheated to the last. Scarpia's murder has now been discovered and Spoletta and others rush in to take Tosca. Evading them she runs to the ramparts and with the words "*O Scarpia, avanti a Dio!*" — ("Scarpia, we meet before God!"), Flora Tosca flings herself from the high parapet to death below.

# AÏDA

GIUSEPPE VERDI, 1813-1901

*Aida* was commissioned by the Khedive of Egypt for the Opera House, Cairo, where it was first performed in December, 1871. The composer was then in his late fifties. *Aida* was to be followed after long intervals by *Otello* and *Falstaff*. These three belong to Verdi's greatest period and represent the full

maturity of his genius and experience. The "scenario" for *Aida* and the authentic local colour were furnished by the French Egyptologist, Mariette Bey. Verdi and Camille du Locle together worked on the original libretto, which was in French. The final version in Italian was produced by Antonio Ghislanzoni.

## ACT I

After the brief subdued prelude a hall in the palace of Memphis is disclosed. Radames (Tenor), Captain of the Guard, is told by Ramphis (Bass), High Priest of Egypt, of the rumoured invasion by the Ethiopians of the sacred soil of Egypt and that the oracle of Isis has already named the Egyptian Commander. Radames, in the aria *Celeste Aïda*, wishes that he might be the chosen warrior so that by his victories he might win Aida and free her from slavery. It is not known in Egypt that Aïda, favourite slave of Amneris, is the captive daughter of the Ethiopian King, Amonasro. Amneris (Mezzo-soprano), daughter of the King of Egypt, enters, soon followed by Aïda (Soprano). Amneris is tormented in her secret love for Radames by suspicions that he, instead, is in love with Aïda — suspicions which are strengthened by the glances she sees exchanged between the two. Masking her anger, Amneris, affects sympathy and friendship for Aïda. News of the Ethiopian invasion, (led by Amonasro) is confirmed by a Messenger (Tenor). The King (Bass) proclaims Radames to be the leader chosen by Isis. To the strains of a solemn march all repair to the Temple for Radames' investiture. Aïda, alone, re-echoes the cry *Ritorna vincitor* ("Return victorious") and her succeeding aria is the distraught expression of the conflict within her — love for Radames, the Egyptian, warring with the love for her father, brothers and fellow countrymen who will be his opponents in the coming battle.

The scene moves to the Temple of Vulcan where with ceremonial chant and ritual dance Radames is solemnly invested as commander while victory for the Egyptian army is implored of the deity Phtha.

Sixty-Eight

## ACT II

Victory is to the Egyptians, and Amneris, in her apartment in the palace at Thebes, is being arrayed by her slaves for the ceremonial reception of the triumphant army and its leader. African slave boys dance before her. Only Aïda is still unaware of the victory and Amneris decides that the moment has come to probe her heart. Craftily she lies that the Egyptians have been routed and that Radames is dead. From Aïda's despair at this cruel news and her great cry of joy when Amneris tells her of the deception, Amneris learns what she has dreaded to know. In a frenzy of rage and jealousy she taunts the unhappy Aïda with her servitude. As the slave that she is, Aïda shall attend her, Amneris, the daughter of the Pharaohs, when from her throne beside the King she places the laurels of victory on Radames' brow.

The "Triumph Scene" that ensues is one of the most spectacular in opera, engaging the full technical and musical resources of the theatre. At the gates of Thebes Radames and his soldiers are received in splendour. Radames is invited by the King to ask what favour he pleases. He first asks that the captives be brought in. Amongst them is Amonasro (Baritone), disguised, who admits only to be an officer and Aïda's father. Amonasro, King of Ethiopia, he says, fell in the battle. Radames' petition is that the captives be released. At the demand of Ramphis and the priests, however, Amonasro and Aïda are held as hostages. Finally, on the saviour of his country the King bestows the hand of Amneris — together one day they shall rule Egypt. With Amneris exulting over her unhappy rival and with demonstrations of

popular joy (Chorus : *Gloria all' Egitto*) the curtain falls.

### ACT III

A moonlit scene by the banks of the Nile. Amneris passes on her way to spend the vigil of her marriage in the Temple of Isis. Aïda steals in for a last meeting with Radames before she seeks peace and oblivion beneath the waters of the Nile. The aria *O patria mia* is a sad farewell to the fatherland she shall never see again. (Note the nostalgic effect created by oboe, clarinets and bassoon.) Amonasro joins her and in their exceedingly dramatic duet unfolds a stratagem of escape, of turning defeat into victory and of restoring Radames to Aïda. If she would entice Radames to fly with her and learn from him which mountain pass the Egyptians will use to march against the resurgent Ethiopians then victory would be assured. Aida recoils from the suggestion but consents at last when Amonasro furiously rejects her — "You are not my daughter, you are but a slave to the Egyptians!" Radames, seduced by his passion for Aïda, falls into the snare. Unguardedly he names the secret route of the Egyptian forces. At his words "the gorge of Napata" the listening Amonasro reveals both himself and his true status. From the temple Amneris and the High Priest too have overheard. The Guard is alerted. Amonasro and Aïda disappear into the darkness. Radames, accused of treason, surrenders his sword to the High Priest.

### ACT IV

In a sombre hall of the palace Amneris awaits the passage of Radames to trial for high treason. This scene is dominated by Amneris. Agonised by remorse at the destruction her jealous rage has brought on Radames, she implores him to defend himself at the trial and in return for his love she will contrive his pardon. But Radames believes that Aïda is dead and would welcome death himself to expiate his crime. It makes no difference that Amneris admits Aïda to be still alive. Silent before his judges, Radames is sentenced to be buried alive. Vainly Amneris inveighs against the priests (*Empia razza*) and the close of the scene leaves her alone and desolate. The music of this scene demands great singing from the mezzo-soprano.

The last scene is a divided one. Above is the Temple of Vulcan; below the dark vault where Radames has been entombed. From the shades behind him a form emerges — Aïda, who has concealed herself there in order to die along with him. Together they sing their ecstatic farewell to earth in the duet *O terra addio* which fades upon the muted ethereal strings of the orchestra and the broken words of Amneris praying that Isis may grant peace to her beloved.

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# AN INTERNATIONAL MUSIC CONTEST

VERCELLI, 1962



Since the last war International Music Contests, like Music and other Festivals, have proliferated. The calendar of the Fédération des Concours Internationaux (Geneva) for 1962-63 listed no fewer than 14 major contests, including those held in Barcelona, Toulouse, Naples, Prague, Munich, Brussels, Geneva itself and Vercelli.

The Concorso Internazionale di Musica e Danza "G. B. Viotti" takes place annually in October in the pleasant Piedmontese city of Vercelli (population 45,000), provincial capital of the vast agricultural and rice-growing plain which is bounded on the north by the foothills of the Alps rising to the Monte Rosa massif and on the south by the river Po. Vercelli was the Wer-Celt of the Celtic Gauls, who founded it in 900 B.C., and the Vercellae of the Romans. In its churches, palaces, art gallery and museum, Vercelli preserves many monuments of its cultural history. Musically, its highest claim to fame is as the birthplace of Giovanni Battista Viotti "the father of modern violin technique" and composer of many fine pieces for that instrument who was born there in 1753.

*Seventy*

During a casual visit to Vercelli last year for the short summer season of opera at the Civic Theatre, I found that the name of the Dublin Grand Opera Society and its work for Italian opera were well known to the organisers of the opera season, the Società del Quartetto, to its Director, Commendatore Dr. Joseph Robbone and to the artists, several of whom had appeared in the D.G.O.S. Seasons in Dublin. After a gala performance of *Un Ballo in Maschera* (with Tagliavini, Protti, Lucia Danieli, conductor Franco Patanè) during which the "Viotti D'Oro" — a sort of operatic "Oscar" — was presented to the famous tenor, Ferruccio Tagliavini, I received an invitation from Dr. Robbone to return to Vercelli that Autumn for the 13th International Music Contest in the role of the "informed dilettante" or non-professional type of member usually included in the Jury.

The Vercelli Contest or, to give it its full title, the Concorso Internazionale di Musica e Danza "Gian Battista Viotti", embraces opera singing, dance, pianoforte and composition. It is sponsored by the City of Vercelli, organised by the Società del Quartetto



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and financed both by the Municipality and the Provincial Administration, as well as by the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture, the provincial Tourist Board and by some of the local banks. Valuable money prizes totalling 5 million lire and other distinctions are awarded annually. Also, the organisers foster the careers of its prizewinners or "laureati" by giving them contracts in the opera tournées in Italy and abroad of the Opera Stabile di Vercelli. This organisation is associated with the Liceo "G. B. Viotti" which includes perfection courses in opera in its curriculum. Prize winners are also assisted in obtaining engagements in leading Italian and foreign opera houses. (The baritone Gianni Maffeo who is to make his Dublin débüt in the current Festival of Italian Opera is an alumnus of the Liceo.)

Prominent among rising international opera stars who are Vercelli "laureati" are Renata Ongaro, Ferruccio Mazzoli, Piero Cappuccilli and Salvatore Gioia, who have appeared with the D.G.O.S., and Luciano Saldari and Mirella Freni of last year's Wexford *Puritani*. Other "names" are Ivo Vinco and Luigi Alva of the Scala and the N.Y. Metropolitan artists Grace Hoffman, Bonaldo Giaiotti, Raina Kabaiwanska and the negro tenor George Shirley. The early careers of these and other artists too numerous to mention must have been greatly helped in their first steps to fame by the recognition received at Vercelli.

On returning duly to Vercelli in October last, I found that my professional colleagues of the Jury (besides Dr. Robbone) were to be Mme. Zita Fumagalli, a former prima donna of the Scala in the Toscanini régime and now Professor of Singing at the Liceo, Mme. Carolina Segrera Holden of New York, also a former prima donna and now associated with the American Opera Auditions group; Maestro Ettore Campogalliani, one of Italy's most successful teachers of singing, Arturo Barosi, the Milan impresario, and Maestro Zanni of the music publishing house of Sonzogno. The Chairman was Giulio Confalonieri, eminent Italian composer, musicologist and critic.

The Jury's assignment was no easy one. Candidates were 53 in number and all of them had reached fairly advanced stages in their musical training in Italy and elsewhere. A few had already begun their singing careers. Styles of singing and interpretation were as diverse as their nationalities which included most of the European countries this side of the Curtain (but not, alas, Ireland) and a few beyond it. Australia and Japan, Africa North and South, Cuba, the Near East and both Americas were represented. Candidates were required to have prepared five opera arias of their own choice as test pieces. Official accompanists were provided.

The auditions were held in the Civic Theatre with the Jury accommodated in the large centre box in the main tier. At the first elimination round competitors (known to the Jury at that stage by numbers only) were free to sing any two of their test pieces. Twenty-seven of the 53 survived the first day. On the second day the serious business of the Contest commenced. This time each contestant was assigned for performance two of his own chosen pieces. Each Jury member was required to express his verdict on the contestant by means of marks up to a maximum of 10. Twelve of the 27 survived the second eliminatory test. They included 4 Sopranos (3 Italian, 1 Japanese), 1 Mezzo (Italian), 4 Tenors (an Italian, an American Negro, a Japanese and a Spaniard), 2 Baritones (both Italian) and 1 Bass, a Cuban.

At the final round which was on the evening of the third day a fairly large audience was present and free to mark appreciation of the contestants' efforts by applause. The actual auditions were finished by 11 p.m. and, to quote from the official report of the Contest, the Jury "concluded its labours at 1.15 a.m. on Sunday, the 7th October, 1962", when the results were announced by Maestro Confalonieri on the theatre's loud speaker system to the waiting candidates and their friends. Vercelli is jealous of its standards and its First Prizes are not freely conceded. At the 1962 Competition no competitor in either the Men's

or the Woman's section was held to have displayed the high vocal, musical and interpretative standards and the preparation demanded for the award of a First Prize. The Second Prize, and the Gold Medal of the Rotary Club of Vercelli, went to Benito di Bello, a young Sicilian Baritone who showed great natural gifts and who in order to compete had obtained leave of absence from his compulsory military service. In the Women's Section, the specially increased Second Prize was divided between Giovanna Vighi (Italian Mezzo) and the Sopranos Atsuko Azuma (Japan) and Milena di Giuseppantonio and Adelina Romano, both Italian. The last-mentioned, the prima inter pares and the possessor of a dramatic soprano of the finest quality, should, if she fulfils her present promise, achieve renown as a true Verdi soprano, a type of voice that is rare today.

The Prizewinners Concert followed on Sunday night. On Monday the aspiring opera singers dispersed leaving the field to the 83 contestants in the pianoforte section which occupied most of the following week. To have been a member of the Jury for this noted international opera singing contest was an interesting and instructive, if strenuous, experience as well as a privilege for which the writer is grateful to the Società del Quartetto of Vercelli.

J. F. MacINERNEY.



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